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Principles and Concepts Regarding Any Future Funding Options, Including but Not Limited to Potential Bond Discussions

Recommendation: Review and revise the principles and concepts regarding any future funding options, including but not limited to potential bond discussions; provide strategic direction to staff.

Principles and Concepts

The following principles and concepts were developed at the direction of the Strategic Plan and Policy Subcommittee in an effort to prepare the Conservancy and its Board for any future discussions about potential funding options, including but not limited to potential bond funding discussions.

In developing these principles and concepts, it is not the intent of the subcommittee or of the Conservancy staff to imply it is speaking on behalf of the Administration regarding potential water bond discussions. Rather, these principles and concepts are meant to inform legislators of the Conservancy's priorities as outlined in the Conservancy's Strategic Plan.

The legislation established a Delta Conservancy Fund in the State Treasury and directed that "funds provided for ecosystem restoration and enhancement shall be available for ecosystem restoration projects *consistent with the conservancy's strategic plan* adopted pursuant to Section 32376." [PRC 32360(b)(2)]. The Conservancy's Strategic Plan is built primarily around goals, objectives and strategies. The first four goals address substantive program priorities; the latter two goals address organizational and funding priorities. For each goal the plan identifies multiple objectives: these are focused, actionable and in some cases measurable components of the goals. One or more strategies are associated with each objective. The goals, objectives and strategies are intended to cover the range of responsibilities and authorities that the Legislature articulated for the Conservancy in its enabling legislation.

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The Conservancy thinks it is important that the following concepts are addressed in any future funding discussion, including but not limited to, any discussions regarding revised water bond language.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy needs to be specifically recognized as a primary state agency, along with the California Department of Water Resources and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, to carry out ecosystem restoration in the Delta, as well as to support efforts that advance a range of ecosystem and economic development activities in the region (PRC Section 32322).

- The Delta Conservancy recognition may take several forms; two ways come easily to mind:
 - as a recipient of ecosystem restoration and economic development funding to carry out projects identified in its Strategic Plan, and
 - as a recipient of ecosystem restoration and economic development funding to implement a grants or directed action program for Delta projects that are consistent with the Strategic Plan.
- There is a need to fund agriculture-related and economic development components in a manner that is equitable and proportional to ecosystem restoration components.
 - In its Strategic Plan, the Conservancy states its intention to develop and implement its ecosystem restoration and economic development programs in an equitable and proportional manner, distributing costs and benefits between its co-equal responsibilities consistent with its priorities. The Conservancy encourages future funding discussions that take into account an equitable and proportional split between funding for ecosystem restoration and economic development programs that result in equivalent levels of benefits to the respective programs.
 - The Conservancy's economic development program includes a goal to become a valuable partner with Delta growers, agriculture-related businesses, and residents in protecting and enhancing the Delta's agricultural and working landscapes and sense of place.
- Allow the Conservancy to provide both grants and directed actions to individuals as well as to state agencies, local governments, and other entities as this will provide flexibility for the Conservancy to meet its Legislative mandates.
- Conservancy projects may include collaboration and capacity building projects as well as phased or sequential projects and scientific projects.

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- The Conservancy has been providing innovative forums to build collaboration and cooperation across multiple disciplines and stakeholders (e.g., Delta Restoration Network, Delta Dialogues, etc.); this role is one that could be amplified in a revised water bond.
- Allocate sufficient funding to the Conservancy to address its legislative mandates or any additional requirements that may come out of revised water bond language.
- Provide appropriate authorities, if necessary beyond what is already given to the Conservancy, to effectively and successfully fulfill the requirements of a revised water bond.
- Where feasible and expeditious, encourage partnerships with local Delta entities (e.g., county governments, reclamation districts, farm bureaus, etc.)
- Funds provided to the Conservancy to implement ecosystem restoration projects pursuant to the Bay Delta Conservation Plan shall only be used for ecosystem restoration purposes (Public Resources Code Sect. 32360(3)).

Background

At its December 12, 2012, meeting, the subcommittee directed staff to develop a principles and concepts paper regarding proposed water bond legislation recently introduced. The subcommittee also directed staff to begin meeting with key legislators and their staff to discuss these principles and concepts, and to invite those subcommittee members who could, to join in those meetings.

The Safe, Clean, and Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2010 (water bond) was signed into law on November 9, 2009. This bond measure was not placed on the 2010 or 2012 general election ballots. Legislators are discussing whether to place the existing water bond language on the 2014 ballot, or to revise the water bond language with the intent of lessening the amount.

Contact

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